

An aerial photograph of a river, likely the Colorado River, flowing through a vast, arid landscape. The river is a deep blue, contrasting with the golden-brown, rocky terrain. The mountains are rugged with sharp peaks and deep shadows, suggesting a high-altitude environment. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

Colorado River Interim Surplus Criteria

Final
Environmental Impact
Statement

Volume I

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
December 2000



IN REPLY REFER TO:
LC-2502
ENV-6.00

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lower Colorado Regional Office

P.O. Box 61470

Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

To: All Interested Persons

Subject: Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Colorado River Interim Surplus Criteria

Dear Sir or Madam:

Reclamation has prepared the attached Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that analyzes potential environmental impacts of adopting specific interim criteria under which surplus water conditions may be declared in the Lower Colorado River Basin during an interim period that would extend through 2016.

The interim surplus criteria would establish specific criteria to assist the Secretary of the Interior's (Secretary) annual decision-making for determining surplus conditions. They would also afford Lower Division states users, who have contracted for surplus water, a greater degree of predictability about its annual availability.

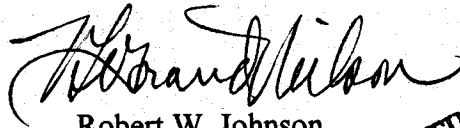
The Secretary currently makes the annual determination of water supply conditions in consultation with the Basin States, Indian Tribes, and other parties as required by Federal law. By considering various factors, including the amount of water in storage and the predicted natural runoff, the Secretary determines if there is sufficient water available in a single year to provide Arizona, California, and Nevada water users more than their basic 7.5 million acre-foot entitlement for consumptive use. If the determination is made that this water is available, the Secretary can make it available to users in these three states as "surplus" water, under provisions of applicable federal law.

The FEIS presents five possible action alternatives for implementation, plus a "no action" alternative. The FEIS includes a preferred alternative. The five potential action alternatives are: (1) "Flood Control Alternative," which would provide surplus water only when flood control releases from Lake Mead are needed, (2) "Basin States Alternative" (Preferred Alternative), (3) "Six States Alternative," (4) "California Alternative," all which specify various Lake Mead water surface elevations to be used as "triggers" to indicate when surplus conditions exist and (5) "Shortage Protection Alternative," which is based on maintaining an amount of water in Lake Mead necessary to provide a normal annual supply of 7.5 maf for the Lower Division, 1.5 maf for Mexico, and storage necessary to provide an 80 percent protection for the critical Lake Mead water elevation of 1083 msl (minimum power generation elevation).

The FEIS is available on the Internet at <http://www.lc.usbr.gov> and <http://www.uc.usbr.gov>. Copies (including compact disks) of the FEIS are also available upon written request to the following address: Ms. Janet Steele, Attention: BCOO-4601, PO Box 61470, Boulder City, Nevada 89006-1470, Telephone: 702-293-8551, or by fax at 702-293-8042.

If you have any further questions, please contact Ms. Jayne Harkins at 702-293-8785 or Mr. Tom Ryan at 801-524-3732.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert W. Johnson".

Robert W. Johnson
Regional Director

ACTING FOR

Enclosure